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REMARKS

Claims 1-92 are pending in this application. All claims were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 in view of at least one of the combinations of Caronni in view of Wasilewski, Foldare and Kadansky. Claims 1, 17, 32, 47, 63 and 78 are currently amended. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

The presently claimed invention distinguishes the cited combinations because each virtual channel associated with the multicast session carries at least one stream of data that is common to all virtual channels associated with the multicast session. The Office cites Caronni for the basic principles of multicast, which Applicant does not assert to have invented. However, the application of multicast to the channels of Wasilewski is not analogous to the presently claimed invention. The Wasilewski virtual channels include multiple, different feeds that are selected at different points in time to produce a television channel. At any given point in time the Wasilewski virtual channel sources are all different from each other, and only one virtual channel can be used as the active feed for the television channel at any given time. Col. 6, lines 33-36. In contrast, the virtual channels of the present invention carry a common data stream, and hence are not significantly different from each other. Further, multiple virtual channels having the same data stream, i.e., same content, can be simultaneously active. This difference is illustrated in the context of the embodiments described in Wasilewski and this application. Wasilewski describes producing a television channel from different video feed channels. One would not simultaneously broadcast an un-separated mixture of multiple video feeds on a single channel because interference would result. In contrast the present application describes video conferencing as the context. In video conferencing it is logical to mix the feeds together at the same time so that everyone can hear and see everyone else simultaneously. Of course, not all of the feeds need be

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identical because, for example, each terminal might filter its own input to the session from what it displays. The claims therefore recite that the virtual channels have "at least one data stream" in common, and the virtual channels are characterized above as being not significantly different from each other, as opposed to being identical streams.

The presently claimed invention further distinguishes the cited combinations because membership differs between the virtual channels. In Wasilewski the head end (52) is the member of the multicast group for all virtual channels. However, the presently claimed invention recites that the virtual channels differ in membership. One reason for having multiple virtual channels with a common data stream at the same time is to create feeds having different membership groups, each with common expectations in terms of duration of membership. Using this technique a group of users of a video conferencing session that expect to participate for three hours, for example, use a different virtual channel than a group of users that expect to participate for only fifteen minutes. This is advantageous because the exit of the fifteen minute users does not force the three hour users to rekey.

The distinguishing features discussed above are recited in each of the independent claims. In particular, each of claims 1, 17, 32, 47, 63 and 78 recite that each virtual channel carries at least one stream of data that is common to all virtual channels associated with the multicast session. Further, each of those claims recites that the virtual channels differ in membership. Withdrawal of the rejections of claims 1, 17, 32, 47, 63 and 78 is therefore requested. Claims 2-16, 18-31, 33-46, 48-62, 64-77, and 79-92 are dependent claims which further distinguish the invention, and which are allowable for the same reasons stated above with regard to their respective base claims. Withdrawal of the rejections of those dependent claims is therefore also requested.

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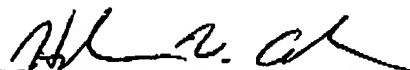
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Applicants have made a diligent effort to place the claims in condition for allowance. However, should there remain unresolved issues that require action, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner telephone the undersigned, Applicants' Attorney, at 978-264-4001 (X305) so that such issues may be resolved as expeditiously as possible.

For these reasons, and in view of the above amendments, this application is now considered to be in condition for allowance and such action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Date

  
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